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Preprint

Information Provision for Informed Consent Procedures in Psychological Research under the GDPR: A Practical Guide

Dara Hallinan
FIZ Karlsruhe — Leibniz Institute for Information Infrastructure

Franziska Boehm
FIZ Karlsruhe — Leibniz Institute for Information Infrastructure

Annika Külpmann
Faculty of Psychology, Ruhr University Bochum

Malte Elson
Faculty of Psychology, Ruhr University Bochum
Horst Görtz Institute for IT Security, Ruhr University Bochum

Abstract

Psychological research often involves the collection and processing of personal data from human research participants, and there is a norm that informed consent should be obtained before such research can go ahead. The European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) applies, in principle, to psychological research. It elaborates a range of conditions concerning the forms of information which should be communicated to research participants whenever personal data are collected from them, in order that they might be considered to be 'informed'. There is reason to believe, however, that the information required by the GDPR may not always be provided in consent materials. This may – at least in part – be due to the fact that psychological researchers are not aware of the exact requirements. This tutorial thus aims to provide general practical guidance to psychological researchers allowing them to understand which forms of information must be provided to research subjects in consent materials according to the GDPR.

Keywords: informed consent, research ethics, data protection, privacy, GDPR

Information Provision for Informed Consent Procedures in Psychological Research under the GDPR: A Practical Guide

Information self-determination has become an increasingly important topic in the digital age. Although the right of individuals to control the processing of their personal data has long been relevant to human subject research, psychology's push towards open data (Kidwell et al., 2016) has highlighted the importance of the lawfulness of data processing, as well as concerns over privacy and data protection violations. In order for participants to make an informed decision about whether or not to support a research endeavour by consenting to participate, they need to be informed as to what this processing will entail – for example concerning which of their personal data will be collected, why, and with whom they will be shared.

Box 1: To Whom is this Tutorial Addressed?

In principle, this tutorial is addressed to all psychological researchers, whenever they conduct research on personal data collected directly from research subjects, the collection and processing of which is subject to the GDPR. This may include, for example:

- Researchers in the European Economic Area (EEA) conducting research in the EEA. The EEA currently includes all 27 EU member states and three European Free Trade Association states (Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway)
- Researchers outside the EEA conducting research to which the conditions of the GDPR still apply – for example conducting research on personal data collected from research participants within the EEA to which the conditions of the GDPR continue to apply.

Certain legal obligations governing the forms of information which must be provided to research participants, whenever personal data are collected from them, are elaborated in the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR; Regulation 679/2016). This regulation, including the obligations relevant for consent procedures in psychological research appearing in Article 13 and in associated authoritative guidance, is applicable across the European Economic Area (EEA; see Box 1), However, there is reason to believe compliance with these obligations may not always be the norm in psychological research – as the psychological curriculum usually does not cover legal training, nor is there always support infrastructure

Dara Hallinan, FIZ Karlsruhe – Leibniz Institute for Information Infrastructure; Hermann-von-Helmholtz-Platz 1, 76344, Eggenstein-Leopoldshafen, Germany. Tel: +49 7247 808 176; E-Mail: dara.hallinan@fiz-karlsruhe.de

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(e.g., legal counsel) to advise psychologists as they draft information materials for a study.

Setting the Scene

This tutorial presents general practical guidance aimed at elaborating the forms of information which should be provided in informed consent procedures in psychological research under the GDPR. In this regard, the tutorial should help all psychological researchers, who aim to engage in research involving personal data, to understand what is required of them according to the GDPR. In turn, following the steps described in this tutorial should support research participants in making an informed decision which research they would like to donate their data to.

Box 2: Personal Data, Sensitive Data, and Anonymisation in Psychological Research

According to Article 4(1) GDPR, "'personal data' means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ('data subject'); an identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person" (Regulation 679/2016). In this regard, an individual's full name might be regarded as directly identifiable personal data. Equally, an extensive dataset including large amounts of health and demographic data about a specific individual, whilst not explicitly including a direct identifier such as a full name, may be regarded as indirectly identifiable personal data. Article 9(1) GDPR defines sensitive personal data as data "revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, or trade union membership, and the processing of genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a natural person, data concerning health or data concerning a natural person's sex life or sexual orientation". According to Recital 26 of the GDPR, anonymous data is, "information which does not relate to an identified or identifiable natural person or... personal data rendered anonymous in such a manner that the data subject is not or no longer identifiable" (Regulation 679/2016). See also Article 29 Working Party (2004, 2007) for a more in depth discussion on the concepts of personal data and anonymization.

We want to highlight three limitations upfront. First, as each nation will have national laws in addition to the GDPR that regulate data protection, and as other forms of obligation may be relevant (e.g., ethical requirements), this guidance does not necessarily cover all information provision requirements relevant to consent in psychological research in the EEA. Second, we build around the concrete information provision requirements in Article 13 GDPR and associated authoritative guidance (Article 29 Working Party, 2018; European Data Protection Board, 2020a). These should, however, not be regarded as necessarily always providing an exhaustive list of forms of information which may need to be communicated in consent materials according to the GDPR. In special cases, the GDPR may require that supplemental information is provided. Third, this is general practical guidance. Accordingly, it should never be taken as a substitute for context specific deliber-

ation, and checking, as to what research participants may need to know to be 'informed'. For example, our guidance does not deal with issues concerning the processing of personal data concerning children. Equally, issues may be discussed, and recommendations provided, which may not be accurate and valid for a specific context.

This guidance only addresses issues directly connected with the content of information to be provided – we will not go into detail regarding the appropriate form of information provision. Thus, to make effective use of this guidance, we recommend two additional steps. First and foremost, researchers should clarify whether, when, and how data protection law applies in relation to a study. Only when data protection law applies in relation to a study (or part of a study) are the requirements of data protection law relevant. While this may seem obvious, there is often significant confusion regarding key terms defining the applicability of data protection law, for example, 'personal data' and 'anonymity' (see Box 2). Generally, when there is doubt as to whether personal data will be processed, we suggest that the safe course of action will be to presume applicability in psychological research.

Subsequently, researchers should make sure to present information to research participants such that it is easily accessible and comprehensible. We recommend researchers should

- place all information relevant to fulfilling obligations under data protection law in one, clearly identifiable, sub-section of consent materials
- effectively communicate varying data protection conditionalities applying in relation to different types of data collected, or in relation to different aspects of a research project
- ensure they do not use conflicting terminology across consent materials – e.g., conflicting uses of the term 'anonymous'. In case of potential conflict, definitions provided in law should be adopted
- be aware that active provision of relevant types of information is usually required by law – i.e. mere general indications that 'data protection conditions apply' or similar, may not be adequate (Article 29 Working Party, 2018).

Where we thought it useful, we provide elaborations of legal requirements for psychological researchers which build upon i) the aim of the provisions in law – i.e. that the provision of information to research participants should allow them to effectively understand and evaluate research – and ii) existing fruitful approaches, recommendations and templates – including those already used by psychological researchers, e.g. by the German Psychological Society (Ethikkommission der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Psychologie, 2021). With this in mind, researchers should provide the following ten types of information in consent materials.

1. Information about the Controller(s) of Data (see Box 3)

a) The identity of, and contact information for, the controller(s) and/or their representatives. This information should be clearly marked. It is not adequate to simply provide

the contact information for the lead researcher/a project representative without further clarification as to whether this person is the controller/the controller's representative. Should there be a difference in the identity of the controller and other parties mentioned in consent materials as responsible/contact points for the project, this should also be made clear. Where multiple controllers are relevant, each should be clearly listed, and it should be made clear who will have responsibility for each aspect of processing.

Box 3: Who are Controllers in Psychological Research?

In principle, according to Article 4(7) GDPR: "'controller' means the natural or legal person, public authority, agency or other body which, alone or jointly with others, determines the purposes and means of the processing of personal data; where the purposes and means of such processing are determined by Union or Member State law, the controller or the specific criteria for its nomination may be provided for by Union or Member State law" (Regulation 679/2016). According to the (European Data Protection Board, 2020b, p. 10): "In practice (...) it is usually the organization as such, and not an individual within the organization (...) that acts as a controller within the meaning of the GDPR. Sometimes (...) a specific person responsible for the implementation of the processing activity [will be appointed]. Even if a specific natural person is appointed to ensure compliance with data protection rules, this person will not be the controller but will act on behalf of the legal entity (...) which will be ultimately responsible in case of infringement of the rules in its capacity as controller". In relation to psychological research, it will often be the case that a specific researcher – e.g., the lead researcher – will be responsible for the organization of data processing in relation to a project and, in such cases, it may make sense to list this person as the controller's representative.

b) The contact information for the data protection officer. The researcher responsible for designing the consent form should be sure to find out whether their organisation has a data protection officer, and if so, whether it is necessary to list the officer in the consent materials. In this regard, data protection officers are responsible for ensuring compliance with the GDPR and their identity and contact information should already be made public (Article 29 Working Party, 2017b).

2. The Purposes of the Processing

a) The purposes of processing for which research participants' personal data have been collected. The researcher designing the consent materials should be as specific as possible with regard to the aim of the processing – usually the purposes of the project for which the data have been collected. If multiple specific purposes are foreseen at the time of collection, each of these should be listed – and it may be necessary to allow participants the possibility to consent to each purpose separately. As data may be collected for research purposes not foreseeable at the moment of collection, broader purposes may, in certain cases, be elaborated. The researcher should check, however, whether broader statements of purpose fulfil relevant conditions (European Data Protection Board, 2020a). If researchers intend to use the personal data for other research projects in future, this should be explicitly

communicated. In certain cases, it is possible that the means of processing – apart from the purposes – may not be obvious for research participants but may still be relevant to participants' decision as to whether to participate in research. In such cases, these means of processing should also be communicated. For example, if, in the case of research aiming at the production of information on "feelings of community" which engages members of a certain religious group as participants, part of the process of the research project involves a methodological step based on psychological constructs related to religion, which are likely to be disputed or objected to by the religious group, this step might need to be communicated if it is not implicitly clear in relation to the research goal. Where multiple parties will process personal data for different purposes, or where different types of personal data will be processed for different purposes, this should be made clear to research participants. Research for which the true purpose of data processing is deliberately not communicated to research participants requires further considerations (see Box 4).

Box 4: A Note on Deception

Psychologists routinely have reason to leave participants in the dark about the intent of their research to preserve the fidelity of the participants' responses. They may vaguely describe a study on racist stereotypes as "social cognition research". Instructions given to participants may suggest they assume the role of a teacher in a study on human learning when the study is actually about obedience to authority. The GDPR-compliant use of deception is an issue which has, currently, no easy answer. This is an issue which has been explicitly flagged as requiring further thought and research in authoritative guidance on scientific research and the GDPR (European Data Protection Supervisor, 2020, p. 21). The problem of GDPR compliance is avoided if researchers do not rely on personal data in their research – i.e., if researchers only collect and process anonymized data (see Box 2). If this is not possible, we would suggest researchers obtain case-specific guidance from relevant authorities – i.e., those authorities tasked, in a given instance, with providing information to researchers as to the interpretation of relevant legal conditions under data protection law – as to how to proceed.

b) The legal basis on which this processing occurs. All processing of personal data under the GDPR requires a legal basis and all legal bases are listed exhaustively in Article 6 GDPR. Consent is a commonly used legal basis for psychological research. Where sensitive personal data (see Box 2) are collected and processed, a legal basis will also , supplementally, be required under Article 9 GDPR – consent is also a possible legal base under Article 9. Where necessary, the controller should also highlight any national laws derogating/specifying the GDPR relevant for legitimate processing. We would highlight that, simply as research subjects are requested to provide consent in relation to a research project, i) this does not necessarily mean consent is the legal base under Articles 6 and 9 GDPR relevant for legitimating processing, and ii) the mere fact that consent is requested is not a reason to fail to provide information as to the legal base (European Data Protection Board, 2019).[1]

[1]We recognise this elaboration might be confusing for psychologists. It may be considered in the following way. The GDPR is one law, which offers certain possibilities to legitimate the processing of personal data. One of these possibilities is consent, which must be obtained under certain conditions. In a given case,

c) The legitimate interests pursued by the controller if the legal basis is Article 6(1)(f) GDPR. Where the legal base for processing in a project is Article 6(1)(f) GDPR – "processing is necessary for the purposes of the legitimate interests pursued by the controller or by a third party" – the researcher should list the legitimate interests according to which they are processing the personal data. These legitimate interests may, where appropriate, include the conduct of scientific research.

3. Risks and Safeguards[2]

a) Risks. Researchers should be clear as to any risks related to processing for their research which may not be immediately clear to participants. In certain cases, processing for research purposes will not pose obvious direct risks. In many cases, however, and despite best efforts, there will be some risk that external parties may gain access to personal data – whether by gaining access to personal data held by researchers, or by reidentification of anonymised published data sets. This risk will increase as the richness of a data sets increases (El Emam et al., 2011). We would suggest that such risks are explicitly highlighted to research subjects.

b) Safeguards. Researchers should also be clear as to the measures – which might be either technical or organisational, or otherwise – they have taken to ensure that risks are minimised, that personal data are used only for the purposes for which they are collected and are accessed only by those who should have access – e.g., pseudonymisation or encryption.

4. Recipients of Data

a) Recipients inside the project. Identification of different types of recipients need not include a list of all possible researchers who will access the data. However, if there are different types of researchers – for example conducting different kinds of research, or researchers from different institutions – which may access the data, or if there are different types of non-research entities which will access the data as part of the project, these parties and their roles should be communicated. Eventually, it should be clear to research participants who will have access to which data and what they will do with the data.

b) Recipients external to the project. This includes external researchers and external parties connected with the research process – such as quality control authorities. This also

in a given jurisdiction, consent may not be available as a legal basis to justify processing in psychological research – for example as the conditions of consent, as outlined in the GDPR, cannot, for whatever reason, be fulfilled. In such a case, another legal base under the GDPR must be sought to legitimate processing – as there must always be a relevant legal base under the GDPR to legitimate processing. In such a case, however, there may be other forms of ethical or legal requirement applicable which mandate that, in order for research to proceed, the research subject must have given their consent. Accordingly, under the GDPR, the legal base for processing personal data will not be consent, whilst the research participant will still have given consent in order to allow the research to proceed.

[2]This is not a category of information whose provision is explicitly foreseen in Article 13 GDPR or associated guidance. We would highlight, however, that one of the purposes of information provision is to allow research subjects to understand the risks research will bring, and, accordingly, unexpected risks, as well as relevant safeguards, should be communicated. Equally, the provision of information on risks and safeguards to data subjects in relation to personal data processing is explicitly mentioned in Recital 39 – Recitals are essentially clarifications of legal provisions offered by the legislator.

includes actors which may access personal data for purposes other than research – for example law enforcement authorities (Dranseika et al., 2016). Researchers should check carefully in advance the range of external parties which may, even only theoretically, have access to the data they hold. These parties should then be communicated to research subjects. If researchers find that third parties can access personal data, a categorical statement to the effect that data will not be transferred to third parties will be inaccurate.

5. Types of Personal Data which will be Collected and Processed

a) Types of data collected directly from the research participants. In principle, participants should be aware of the range of types of facts about them which will be collected. In terms of the detail of breakdown of information collected, researchers should exercise discretion, but should seek to provide participants with information of sufficient granularity that they can understand the full range of facts collected from them and can evaluate the potential consequences related to consenting to providing these facts. Some raw data sets collected from participants could be subject to a range of different analyses and produce a range of different facts about them, e.g., genetic data (Hallinan, 2020). In such cases, researchers should clarify to participants the form of data which will be collected, the forms of information which will be extracted from this data in the course of research, and the other types of information which might potentially be extracted from the collected data – even if not planned within the context of the study in question. These potentially extracted information may be extensive, and even uncertain at the moment of collection, e.g., due to scientific advances (Article 29 Working Party, 2004). In such cases, we would suggest that researchers highlight these facts to research participants and provide them with information sources which will allow them to understand the current and prospective situation should they wish. The sources should be chosen, as far as possible, such that they are accessible for laypersons.

b) Types of data which will be generated in the course of research. If analysis conducted by researchers is likely to result in the generation of new information about research participants – i.e., novel information not collected from participants – then this information should be explicitly communicated. For example, if psychologists appear to only collect information on a simple game, but plan to analyse this information to make inferences about participants' personalities or social capabilities, the fact that new information will be generated concerning personality and social capabilities should be communicated. This is especially true if information is generated which research participants would not expect to be generated from the personal data they have provided and their knowledge of the purposes of processing (e.g., implicit measures). Researchers should also indicate the types of scientific conclusions they aim to generate. If incidental findings, which may be of importance to the individual (e.g., a diagnostic finding resulting from an fMRI scan), may be generated, the possibility of such findings should be communicated to the research participants, as well as the consequences if they occur.[3]

[3]In certain cases, it may also be suitable or necessary for researchers to provide participants with the option of choosing whether such findings should be communicated or not.

6. International Transfers

a) Transfers. In the case that personal data may be transferred outside the borders of the EU/EEA, this should be communicated to the research participants as specifically as possible, including:

- information as to which personal data will be transferred, who will receive the personal data and their location;
- information as to the legal legitimation of the transfer – given that, in principle, transfers of personal data outside the EU are only legally legitimate provided certain conditions are fulfilled (Chapter V and particularly Articles 44-49 GDPR) – for example, if an adequacy decision is in place regarding the fact that the level of data protection in a third country is equivalent to that in the EU; and
- information concerning the conditions, safeguards, and, in the absence of such safeguards, the risks, associated with the transfer (European Data Protection Board, 2021). Risks may vary depending on the transfer in question.

Researchers planning to share data in a public repository should provide participants with specific information about the conditions and risks involved (see Box 5).

Box 5: Data Sharing

Researchers are routinely expected to share research data with others, either because of their commitment to professional guidelines (American Psychological Association, 2017, section 8.14), journal policies (Giofrè et al., 2017), or due to changing norms in psychology towards openness and transparency (Kidwell et al., 2016). Accordingly, researchers should make sure their consent form is designed with possible sharing requirements in mind. As such, researchers should make sure research participants have relevant information concerning sharing, including i) the parties with which personal data will, or may, be shared, ii) risks which may arise from sharing, iii) measures taken to protect participants rights in shared datasets – for example technical measures aimed at restricting identifiability in a dataset, such as pseudonymisation measures – iv) conditions of data access, such as who might access data and how, and v) restrictions on the purposes of future data (re)uses. Where sharing is likely, we recommend avoiding promises such as "strict confidentiality" – which may be unrealistic to achieve – or being overly restrictive in terms of lists of (potential) recipients. The sharing of fully anonymised data may not, according to data protection law, require consent from its originators. However, it may still be good practice – or required under other applicable laws or ethical principles – to inform research participants a priori about such plans and to obtain their consent.

7. Storage Periods

a) The length of time personal data will be stored. We would suggest that, as far as possible, the reason for the storage period (e.g., in months, years) is provided – e.g. the period is elaborated as best practice by a relevant body or organisation (see, e.g., the recommendations for psychological research in Germany by the German Psychological

Society, Schönbrodt et al., 2016). It should be made clear precisely what will happen to personal data after this time period – e.g., whether data will be anonymised or destroyed. Should personal data be sent to third parties in the course of the project, it should be made clear whether these parties will also respect this storage period and, if not, what differences are relevant.

b) The criteria according to which the length of time will be decided. In case it is not possible to list a specific time period of storage in advance, research participants should be provided with the criteria that determine the period of storage – e.g., if personal data will be deleted following the end of data evaluation in a project.

8. Data Subject Rights

a) Range of rights. In principle, participants should be informed that they have the following rights under data protection law in relation to their personal data:

(i) *The right to withdraw consent (see Article 7(3) GDPR).* Information as to this right technically (according to data protection law) only need be provided when the participant's consent is the legal base on which personal data are processed. We suggest however, that the right is discussed even where this is not the case. Researchers should also clearly differentiate the right to withdraw from the study (e.g., discontinuing participation at some point in the process) from the right to withdraw consent under data protection law. Should personal data have been transferred to third parties, it should be clear what this means in relation to a withdrawal of consent.

(ii) *The right to access (see Article 15 GDPR).* This includes the right to obtain i) confirmation as to whether personal data are being processed, ii) a range of information concerning processing (see Article 15(1) GDPR for a list), and iii) a copy of the personal data being processed.

(iii) *The right to rectification (see Article 16 GDPR).* This includes the possibility to have any incorrect data corrected or updated as necessary, and even the possibility to include a supplementary statement concerning personal data should this be warranted.

(iv) *The right to erasure of personal data (see Article 17 GDPR).* This includes, for example, the possibility to have personal data erased where the participant withdraws consent (and consent is the legal basis) and where the retention of personal data is no longer necessary in relation to the proposed research.

(v) *The right to restrict processing (see Article 18 GDPR).* This includes, for example, the possibility to restrict processing where the participant considers the personal data being processed inaccurate.

(vi) *The right to portability (see Article 20 GDPR).* This includes the possibility for the participant to obtain a copy of the personal data they provided, or to have their data transferred to a third party, in a commonly used format (Article 29 Working Party, 2017c).

(vii) *The right to object to processing (see Article 21 GDPR).* This includes the possibility for research participants to object to processing based on certain legitimate bases in

Article 6 GDPR on the basis of factors specific to their situation. The right does not apply, however, if consent is the legal basis for the processing of personal data under the GDPR.

(viii) *The right to lodge a complaint with a supervisory authority.* The researcher should provide contact information of the relevant supervisory authority – the responsible Data Protection Authority, a national regulator dealing with data protection law.

b) Exceptions. Certain rights may not apply in relation to certain cases of psychological research – for example if legitimate national law derogating from the GDPR foresees such exceptions. In such cases, we would suggest research participants are informed that certain rights are not applicable and provided with a justification for non-applicability.[4]

c) Modalities and consequences of exercise of rights. Researchers should clarify how rights can be exercised, and what consequences exercise would have. This is particularly the case in relation to whether exercising the right to withdraw consent results in retention, anonymisation, or destruction of personal data.

9. Contractual or Statutory Requirements

Research processing based on informed consent will seldom take place based on contractual requirements. Researchers should take care to find out, however, if personal data may need to be processed, in the course of research, based on contract or statutory obligations. In such a case, this should be communicated to research participants in advance along with what this means in relation to their consent.[5]

10. Automated Decision Making

In principle whenever automated decision making – including profiling – which "produces legal effects concerning [an individual] or similarly significantly affects [an individual]" (Article 22(1) GDPR) is involved in a research protocol, the research participants should be given information as to the logic involved in the decisions and as to the possible consequences of the automated decision making. Put simply – whilst there remains some uncertainty as to the terms – legal effects might be understood as any effects which serve to alter participants' legal status or which prevent participants' enjoying legal rights, and similarly significant effects might be understood as significant effects on participants' lives (Article 29 Working Party, 2017a).

For a summary checklist of the above recommendations, see Box 6.

[4]See, for example, for research exceptions relevant to the applicability of certain rights in the German context, Article 27(2) Bundesdatenschutzgesetz.

[5]See, for example, the discussion of the relationship between statutory grounds and research in European Data Protection Board (2019).

Box 6: Checklist on Consent Forms

1. Information About the Controller(s) of Data
   (a) The identity of, and contact information for, the controller(s) or their representatives.
   (b) The contact information for the data protection officer.
2. The Purposes of the Processing
   (a) The purposes of processing for which research participants' personal data have been collected.
   (b) The legal basis on which this processing occurs.
   (c) The legitimate interests pursued by the controller if the legitimate basis is Article 6(1)(f) GDPR.
3. Risks and Safeguards
   (a) Risks.
   (b) Safeguards.
4. Recipients of Data
   (a) Recipients inside the project.
   (b) Recipients external to the project.
5. Types of Personal Data which will be Collected and Processed
   (a) Types of data collected directly from the research participants.
   (b) Types of data which will be generated in the course of research.
6. International Transfers
   (a) which personal data will be transferred and by whom
   (b) legal legitimation of the transfer
   (c) conditions, safeguards, and the risks associated with the transfer.
7. Storage Periods
   (a) The length of time personal data will be stored.
   (b) The criteria according to which the length of time will be decided.
8. Data subject rights
   (a) Range of rights.
      i. The right to withdraw consent (see Article 7(3) GDPR).
      ii. The right to access (see Article 15 GDPR).
      iii. The right to rectification (see Article 16 GDPR).
      iv. The right to erasure of personal data (see Article 17 GDPR).
      v. The right to restrict processing (see Article 18 GDPR).
      vi. The right to portability (see Article 20 GDPR).
      vii. The right to object to processing (see Article 21 GDPR).
      viii. The right to lodge a complaint with a supervisory authority.
   (b) Exceptions.
   (c) Modalities and consequences of exercise of rights.
9. Contractual or statutory requirements.
10. Automated decision making

Conclusions

The GDPR is applicable to psychological research and outlines a series of obligations concerning the forms of information which should be provided to research subjects when personal data are collected from them in the course of research. In this regard, the above constitutes general practical guidance as to the types of information psychological researchers should provide to research subjects in consent procedures, such that these procedures might fulfil the conditions required by the GDPR.

We will end by saying that we do not presume that our guidance already presents an ideal approach – adherence to which will ensure psychological researchers can provide perfect information to research participants in perfect compliance with data protection law. Rather, we hope only that our guidance can constitute a small step towards bridging the knowledge gap between psychological research and data protection law and can assist psychological researchers in the design of better consent materials.

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